

Message Text

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FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ABIDJAN, ACCRA, ADDIS
ABABA, CAIRO, DAKAR, DAR ES SALAAM, GABERONE, KHARTOUM,
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JAN 19:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 0716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, NI, US

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF US-NIGERIAN RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF
DIFFERENCES OVER ANGOLA

REF: STATE 9444

ACCRA FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BLAKE AND JACK HEDGES

1. SUMMARY: THE MIX OF FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON NIGERIA'S ANGOLA
POLICY CONSISTS OF BITTER OPPOSITION TO SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION,
SUSPICION OF US AND ZAIRIAN MOTIVES, FEAR THAT FNLA/UNITA SEEK A
BANDA-TYPE REGIME ON NAMIBIA'S BORDER, BELIEF THAT SUPPORT FOR THE
MPLA WOULD PROVIDE SOME POTENTIAL INFLUENCE OVER IT AND MAKE IT
EASIER FOR THE MPLA TO DESPENSE WITH FURTHER SOVIET/CUBAN ASSIST-
ANCE, DEEP-SEATED SENSIFIVITY OVER "SEPARATIST" OR "SECESSIONIST"
MOVEMENTS (A THROWBACK TO THE BIAFRAN TRAUMA), A GROWING CONVICTION
THAT THE MPLA HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING OUT ANYWAY, AND A DESIRE
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BY THIS NEW FMG REGIME TO PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN AFRICA. US/
NIGERIAN DIFFERENCES ON THIS ISSUE HAVE REDUCED OUR ALREADY SMALL
ABILITY TO INFLUENCE NIGERIAN POSITIONS ON THIS AND OTHER INTER-
NATIONAL PROBLEMS. IN THE SHORT RUN, MUCH HINGES ON EXTENT TO

WHICH US CAN MODIFY ITS STANCE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S MILITARY INTERVENTION. US POSITION TO DATE ON THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN UNACCEPTABLE TO FMG AND CONSTITUTES THE CORE OF CURRENT FMG ANIMUS AGAINST US. US POLICY ON ANGOLA AND ON SOUTHERN AFRICA IN GENERAL IS VIEWED AS CONDITIONED BY FAULTY PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN INTENTIONS AND BY EXTRA-AFRICAN US PRIORITIES. FORTUNATELY THERE HAS AS YET BEEN NO RPT NO SPILL-OVER OF THE ACRIMONY ON ANGOLA ONTO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE US/NIGERIAN RELATIONSHIP. MAJOR NEW ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL DEALS AND OTHER BILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS CONTINUE TO PROCEED FAVORABLY AND WE RECOMMEND BUSINESS-AS-USUAL APPROACH REGARDING NON-POLITICAL DIMENSION OF US/NIGERIAN RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY

2. SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION

THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THIS FMG APPEARS INCREASINGLY MORE ACTIVIST IN THE INTER-AFRICAN ARENA THAN ITS PREDECESSOR. IN PARTICULAR IT WANTS TO PUT TEETH INTO ITS POLICIES ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN QUESTIONS AND APARTHEID (LAGOS 7244, 7/30/75). ONCE SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANGOLAN FIGHTING EXTENDED DEEP INTO THE INTERIOR AND THAT FACT HAD BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, THE HARDLINERS IN THE RULING SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) STEAMROLLED THE MORE MODERATE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHO FAVORED CONTINUED IMPARTIALITY UNDER THE JULY UMBRELLA OF OAU NEUTRALITY. THE MODERATE GROUP INCLUDED EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER GARBA, WHO URGENTLY SOLICITED A US PLEDGE TO PRESSURE SOUTH AFRICA TO WITHDRAW. SUCH A PLEDGE MIGHT HAVE STAVED OFF AT LEAST FOR A TIME THE FMG'S SWITCH TO A POSTURE OF OPEN SUPPORT OF THE MPLA (LAGOS 11625 EXDIS). ONCE THE CHOICE WAS NARROWED TO ONE BETWEEN THE SOVIET/CUBAN-SUPPORTED MPLA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN-BACKED FNLA/UNITA COALITION, NIGERIA'S OPTIONS WERE CLOSED. US POLICY ON ANGOLA IS VIEWED AS MOTIVATED BY CONCERN FOR IMAGE OF US STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE WORLDWIDE AND BY COMPULSION TO STAND UP TO SOVIET/CUBAN CHALLENGE. NIGERIANS VIEW THIS CHALLENGE FROM QUITE ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE, ARGUING THAT US MISTAKENLY EQUATES "INVITED AND HISTORICALLY ACCEPTED" SOVIET/CUBAN FORCES WITH "UNINVITED RACIST" SOUTH AFRICANS (SEE LAGOS 68).

3. MOBUTU AND ZAIRE

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NIGERIAN SUSPICIONS AND HOSTILITY TOWARD ZAIRE, MOBUTU, AND BY EXTENSION MOBUTU'S BROTHER-IN-LAW HOLDEN ROBERTO AND THE FNLA DATE BACK A LONG TIME (LAGOS 8126, AUGUST 21, 1975). NIGERIAN REGIME SEES ZAIRE AS A RIVAL (NOTE NIGERIAN OPPOSITION TO INCLUDING ZAIRE IN ECOWAS) AND ABOVE ALL AS HARBORING ANNEXATIONIST DESIGNS ON CABINDA AND NORTHERN ANGOLA. THE RAPID CONDEMNATION BY THE FMG OF THE CABINDAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE LAST SUMMER WAS NOT ONLY A REFLECTION OF DISTRUST OF ZAIRE BUT A RESTATEMENT OF TRADITIONAL NIGERIAN ATTITUDES POST-BIAFRA REGARDING "SECESSIONIST" OR "SEPARATIST" MOVEMENTS.

4. COALITION MEANS BALKANIZATION

WHILE NIGERIANS AT ONE POINT FOUND THE CONCEPT OF A GOVERNMENT OF

NATIONAL UNITY ATTRACTIVE IN PRINCIPLE, THEY HAVE SINCE COME TO QUESTION WHETHER IT WILL WORK. THEY ARE INCREASINGLY UNIMPRESSED BY THE ARGUMENT THAT SUCH A GOVERNMENT IS THE ONLY LOGICAL SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF THREE COMPETING GROUPS. EACH WITH STRONG REGIONAL BASIS OF POPULAR SUPPORT. GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY THESIS HAS RESTED ON ARGUMENT THAT UNITA CONTROLS MUCH OF SOUTHERN HALF OF ANGOLA, AND THAT MPLA COULD NEVER PACIFY OR ENLIST SUPPORT OF FNLA'S BAKONGO NORTH. NIGERIANS EXPLOIT THIS LINE OF REASONING TO MAKE A DIFFERENT POINT, NAMELY, THAT POWER-SHARING COULD LEAD NOT TO UNITY BUT TO PARTITION. MOBUTU IS SEEN AS WANTING TO ANNEX NORTHERN PART OF ANGOLA AND AS HAVING STRUCK BARGAIN WITH HOLDEN THAT WOULD PERMIT SEPARATE AND ZAIRE-DOMINATED STATUS FOR CABINDA. NIGERIANS USE UNITA'S ALLEGED POPULARITY IN SOUTH AND ALLIANCE OF CONVENIENCE WITH SOUTH AFRICA AS FURTHER SUPPORT FOR THEIR BELIEF THAT PARTITION RATHER THAN NATIONAL UNITY MIGHT BE THE RESULT OF TAKING THE CONCILIATION/COALITION ROUTE. THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH BALKANIZATION OF ANGOLA IS VIEWED WITH EXTREME DISTASTE BY NIGERIANS STILL AFFECTED BY RESIDUAL TRAUMA OF BIAFRAN SECESSION.

5. SUPPORT MPLA AND KEEP ANGOLA WHOLE

WHILE HOLDING NO BRIEF FOR MPLA'S EMBRACE OF SOVIET/CUBAN AID, FMG BELIEVES THAT ALL-OUT SUPPORT OF MPLA FROM WHATEVER SOURCES IS THE BEST WAY TO ACHIEVE A UNIFIED ANGOLA (WITH CABINDA AS AN INTEGRAL PART). TO THE DEGREE THAT AFRICANS PROVIDE SUCH SUPPORT, NIGERIANS THINK THAT AFRICANS ACHIEVE POTENTIAL LEVERAGE ON THE MPLA. SUCH SUPPORT IS ALSO THOUGHT TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE MPLA EVENTUALLY TO DISPENSE WITH PRESENT RELIANCE ON SOVIETS AND CUBANS. RECENT REPORTS OF MPLA SUCCESSES, AS WELL AS STORIES OF FIGHTING BETWEEN

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FNLA AND UNITA, ENCOURAGE NIGERIANS TO BELIEVE THAT NATIONAL UNITY MAY IN FACT BE ACHIEVABLE UNDER MPLA BANNER. NIGERIANS THINK MPLA IS LESS TRIBAL, BETTER ORGANIZED, AND HAS MORE REFINED AND ARTICULATED POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAM THAN ITS COMPETITORS. THEY CONTRAST FACT THAT FNLA/UNITA HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY NOBODY WITH RECOGNITIONS OF MPLA BY HALF THE OAU COUNTRIES AND A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF OTHERS. FINALLY, THEY MISS NO CHANCE TO REITERATE THEIR CONVICTION THAT FNLA/UNITA HAVE LOST ALL CLAIM TO LEGITIMACY ANYWAY BY VIRTUE OF THEIR ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

6. LONGTERM OBJECTIVES: ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA

ANOTHER FACTOR IN FMG'S VIEW OF ANGOLAN CRISIS IS THE BELIEF THAT THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT THAT RESULTS IN ANGOLA WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF NIGERIA'S AND AFRICA'S LONG-TERM GOAL OF "LIBERATING" ZIMBABWE AND NAMIBIA. THE FMG BELIEVES THAT AN MPLA-DOMINATED REGIME WOULD BE MORE IN SYMPATHY WITH THE LIBERATIONIST THESIS AND MORE READY TO KEEP THE HEAT ON SMITH AND VORSTER. BY CONTRAST THEY SEE FNLA/UNITA AS CONNIVING WITH SOUTH AFRICA TO FORM SOME KIND OF SOUTHERN ANGOLAN BUFFER BETWEEN "TRULY INDEPENDENT" ANGOLA AND NAMIBIAN APARTHEID.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY TOWARD NIGERIA

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKDROP THAT US POLICY ON ANGOLA IS VIEWED BY NEW FMG REGIME AS IRRELEVANT AT BEST AND MALEVOLENT AND ANTI-AFRICAN AT WORST. WE DOUBT THERE IS MUCH THAT US CAN DO IN THE SHORTRUN TO IMPROVE NIGERIAN-US UNDERSTANDING ON ANGOLAN OR SOUTHER AFRICAN ISSUES. THE KINDS OF MOVES FMG WOULD REQUIRE OF US DO NOT APPEAR TO BE WITHIN CURRENT US POLICY POSSIBILITIES. BUT WE SHOULD AT VERY LEAST DO OUR BEST TO CONVINCE FMG THAT WE ARE LISTENING TO THEM AND THAT WE UNDERSTAND FMG APPROACH TO ANGOLAN PROBLEM EVEN THOUGH WE DO NOT SHARE IT. NEITHER SCOLDING NOR EXHORTATION WILL GET US ANYWHERE, NOR CAN WE EXPECT NIGERIANS TO BE PATIENT WITH US IF WE CONTINUE TO SEEM TO THEM TO BE "TWISTING ARMS" OF OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS AND/OR CONSPIRING WITH EUROPEAN POWERS ON BEHALF OF A SOLUTION THAT FMG NOW REJECTS.

8. ACCENT THE POSITIVE

IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT FMG IS BEING TEMPTED USE TIME-WORN THEMSES OF CRITICISM OF US AS DEVICE TO ACHIEVE POPULARITY AT HOME AND ATTENTION AND INFLUENCE ELSEWHERE ON THE CONTINENT. AMBASSADOR
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SANU'S HARD LINE AGAINST US AFRICAN POLICY IN JANUARY 14 TELEVISION INTERVIEW IS HARDLY REASSURING. WE ARE REASONABLY CONFIDENT HOWEVER, THAT FMG DOES NOT WISH PERMIT CRITICISM OF US TO REACH POINT OF SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZING OTHERWISE EXCELLENT BILATERAL RELATIONS. FORTUNATELY WE HAVE GOOD OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE US FOR FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF ALREADY FAVORABLE TRENDS IN NON-POLITICAL AREAS. WE THINK FMG SHARES OUR INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO PUSH AHEAD IN THESE DIRECTIONS. THERE IS PROMISE OF SOLID NEW ACHIEVEMENT AS PRODUCT OF AMBITIOUS AND IMAGINATIVE INITIATIVES UNDERWAY IN COMMERCIAL, INVESTMENT AND CONSTRUCTION FIELDS. EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC SECTION, COLLABORATING CLOSELY WITH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, OPIC, US PRIVATE SECTOR, AND WIDE VARIETY OF NIGERIAN OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE ENTITIES, IS DOING YEOMAN WORK IN THIS REGARD. FMG MILITARY HIERARCHY'S INTEREST IN US TRAINING, US HEAVY VEHICLES, US CONSULTANTS AND BUILDERS FOR BARRACKS PROGRAM, AND US JET TRAINERS AND OTHER

AIRCRAFT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE ACTIVE. DEFENSE AND AIR ATTACHES CONTINUE ENJOY EXCELLENT DAY-TO-DAY RELATIONSHIPS WITH TOP LEVELS OF NIGERIAN MILITARY HIERARCHY. EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM CONTINUES ELICIT GOOD COLLABORATION FROM FMG COUNTERPARTS, AND AID DISCUSSIONS IN PAST WEEK WITH MINISTRY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON GREATER ROLE FOR FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE HAVE BEEN POSITIVE. IT IS IN THESE AREAS THAT THERE IS SCOPE FOR WIDE VARIETY OF CONTINUING EFFORTS DIRECTED AT IMPROVED RELATIONS. WE SEE UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON'S VISIT IN A SIMILAR CONTEXT, AND BELIEVE HIS PRESENTATION OF US/NIGERIAN SYMBIOSIS IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD SHOULD FALL ON RECEPTIVE EARS. EASUM UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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